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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON. — January 28, 1959 DATE

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SUBJECT: Overseas Understanding of Mutual Security Programs. TR-3

JOINT EMBASSY/USIS/USOM DESPATCH

Following is a report on progress in implementing the joint directive contained in the Department's instruction under reference:

1. Both the Technical Cooperation Agreement of July 21, 1955, and the Economic Development Agreement of April 1957 between the United States of America and Libya contain standard wording on the host government's obligation toward publicity. As seems to be typical of Libyan Governments, however, even when it comes to publicizing their own programs and policies, the present Government of Libya has made almost no effort to publicize the U. S. assistance programs. In July 1957, two comprehensive reports on our programs of assistance were issued by the Government of Libya in the form of reports to the Prime Minister from the Chairman of the Libyan-American Reconstruction Commission, and the Libyan Government representative on the Libyan-American Joint Services. Most of the work on the reports, however, was done by USOM/L. Nevertheless, these were thought to be useful and consideration is being given to ways and means of inspiring the Government of Libya to repeat them in 1959. A more direct effort to bridge the gap is being made through a Libyan Government information project as part of the Mutual Security Program in Libya. Through this project, the United States is making it possible for the Prime Minister's office to have a national newsreel, expand its wire services, and undertake a wall newspaper program. It is the present thought that the United States agencies will be able to provide information on the assistance programs through these media. The foregoing comments apply equally to the dissemination of information on the Mutual Security Program as it operates on a world-wide basis, in connection with which the efforts of USIS have consistently run against a strong current of Libyan bureaucracy.

2. The USIS-USOM coordination agreement previously called for has been prepared. The agreement is dated December 15, 1956.

3. Under the existing circumstances, and within the capabilities of its resources, it is believed that the information activities conducted by USIS have been as effective as they could be. USIS has maintained a continuing flow of publicity on U. S. activities in Libya through Al Maarifa, the Arabic language bi-weekly magazine, which has the largest circulation of any publication in Libya and is widely read, through articles placed in the local newspapers; and through

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photographic displays in the libraries in Tripoli and Benghazi. The situation has improved greatly over the past year and a half in comparison to the previous year when government Suez crisis-imposed restrictions greatly curtailed USIS operations. The situation as concerns the cooperation of the Government of Libya is not likely to be improved, however, except through a change in the attitudes of the Libyan authorities. It is generally thought that more should be done in this latter connection and the following recommendations for improvement are suggested:

a. The Ambassador recently has been giving a series of teas for members of the Libyan Chamber of Deputies and Senate, as well as other prominent Libyans, at which various aspects of the assistance programs have been discussed. It is planned to follow up on these initial discussions by furnishing individual Libyans with data on the programs, and particularly those in which the individual may have expressed interest.

b. USOM plans, in collaboration with USIS, to prepare a series of summary and analytical reports, with pictures, covering separately at least the three major divisions of the economic assistance program, namely, health, education and agriculture. Renewed attempts will be made to get these reports or portions of them printed in the local newspapers.

c. Efforts will be made to make full use of the recently established information program of the Libyan Government in publicizing the assistance programs, as described in paragraph 1, above.

4. It is debatable whether the political and psychological aspects of the U. S. assistance programs have been given proper weight in the past. USOM/L, it is believed, always has placed greater emphasis on economically productive projects which usually are of long-range benefit. Socalled "impact projects" invariably possess less economic justification. Greater consideration is now being given by USOM to the political requirements of the GOL and the Country Team will meet periodically for the purpose of consultation on the political and psychological aspects of the program.

5. It is understood that USOM/L submits information regularly to Washington on its activities in Libya. Nevertheless, as suggested in the instruction under reference, the Director of USOM/L and the Chief of MAAG are being requested to designate appropriate officers to work with the Public Affairs Officer to assure that sufficient information is transmitted regularly to the Mutual Security Information Staff.

6. USIS works closely with MAAG and already has developed a number of public relations activities on the work of the MAAG mission. The activities of MAAG training teams in Libya and of Libyan Army personnel sent elsewhere for training have been put to good use in photographic displays, and have been the subject of illustrated articles in Al Marifa and the local press.

J. Wesley Jones

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